



CATAWBA COUNTY

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HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS WEEK TO BE HELD IN CATAWBA COUNTY

Members of the public are invited to attend several events during Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, Nov. 13-20. The week is sponsored locally by Housing Visions: A Continuum of Care, a group of area organizations that deal with these issues.

Hunger and homelessness are affecting more local people due to the economic recession and loss of jobs. Many people are facing foreclosure or having difficulty meeting their basic living expenses. This series of events will shed light on the problem and provide information on how local persons, churches, businesses and other groups can help. Most events are free with the donation of an item that will be given to area individuals experiencing homelessness. Events with an admission fee and early registration are noted.

On Sunday, Nov. 13, the public is invited to attend the worship service that is held weekly for persons who are homeless at 8 a.m. on Union Square in Hickory. This ministry is conducted by Our Father's Pavilion.

On Monday, Nov. 14, The Carolina Theater in Hickory will show the movie "The Help" at 7 p.m. to benefit awareness. Admission for the general public is by donation of an item for a homeless person. Admission is free for persons who are homeless.

On Tuesday, Nov. 15, the public is invited to participate in games of bingo with persons experiencing homelessness at 1 p.m. at the Hickory Soup Kitchen.

On Tuesday, Nov. 15, there will be a Homeless Forum at the Catawba Valley Community College Auditorium at 5:30 p.m. The keynote speaker will be Hugh Hollowell, director of Love Wins Ministries, a ministry to individuals who are homeless in the Raleigh, N.C., area. Several local persons who are homeless will also speak about their experiences. Those attending are asked to bring items for donation to local individuals experiencing homelessness.

On Wednesday, Nov. 16, there will be a Hunger Banquet at 6 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church of Hickory. The cost is \$6, and reservations are needed by Nov. 11. For more information, or to register, contact Sean Jarman at 659-2134.

On Thursday, Nov. 17, the iCare 4 Catawba Tour of Resources will be held from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Participants will meet at St. Luke's United Methodist Church, where they will eat breakfast. They will then board vans for a tour of the area's resources for children in need throughout the county, featuring agencies in Hickory, Conover and Newton. The event will conclude with lunch. The cost is \$10 per person, and advance registration is required. For more information, visit <http://www.facebook.com/icaretourcatawbacountync> or call 695-5648.

On Friday, Nov. 18, the public will experience the struggles of homelessness through a Sleep Out at the YMCA. This is a great activity for youth groups. For more information, or to register for this event, contact Darin Williams at 324-2858.

On Saturday, Nov. 19, there will be a Block Party at 11 a.m. at Grace House, located at 600 Highland Ave., Hickory. Grace House is a day shelter for persons who are homeless. Members of the public are asked to attend and donate items for persons who are homeless.

Suggested items to donate at the week's events include the following: toilet paper; socks for men, women and children; rain gear such as coats, ponchos and umbrellas; new undergarments of all sizes; hygiene items including travel sizes of shampoo, soap, deodorant, shaving creams, lotion, toothbrushes, toothpaste and disposable razors; backpacks; blankets; batteries; bath towels and wash cloths; gloves; pop-top meat items; bottled water. For additional information, and a complete list of needed items, go to www.housingvisionscatawba.org. Information is also available by calling 327-6851.

A short video about this problem, "Hungry and Homeless in Catawba County," may be viewed at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAWy3aa_Gdc.

Housing Visions partners include the following: the homeless community, A Caring Alternative, ALFA, Catawba County United Way, Catawba Valley Behavioral Healthcare, The Corner Table, Catawba Valley Community College, Catawba County Social Services, Eastern Catawba Cooperative Christian Ministries, Exodus Homes/Exodus Works, Family Guidance Center, Grace House, Greater Hickory Cooperative Christian Ministries, Hickory Police Department, Hickory Soup Kitchen, Homeless Veterans' Program, Mental Health Partners, Our Father's Pavilion, Safe Harbor Rescue Mission, Salvation Army, Sipe's Orchard Home, The Shepherd's Heart. Many of these organizations accept financial donations to assist the homeless and others in need.